The Duty and Benefit of

SUBMISSION to the Will of GOD in AFFLICTIONS.

Discovered in Two

SERMONS

Upon a special Occasion,

At *Stapleford* in *LEICESTER-SHIRE.*

By JOHN CAVE, Rector of *COLD-ORTON* in the same *County*; And Chaplain to the LORD BISHOP of *DURHAM.*

o

Iis qui eruditiuntur Tolerantia succurrit, objectis molestiis generosè resistens, atq; efficiens ne animus concidat, sed pugnet & propulset Doloris ictus. Simpl. in Epictetum.

Quàm pulchrum spectaculum Deo, cùm Christianus cum dolore congreditur, cùm adversùm Minas & Supplicia, & Tormenta componitur. Minut. Fel.

LONDON;

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Rec. June 25, 1898.

TO

The Right Honourable and Truly Noble

THE

LORD and LADY SHERARD

OF

STAPLEFORD.

Right Honourable;

THese *two plain Sermons were compoſed and ſuited to ſerve a great and ſad Occaſion of your* Honours, *reached at your Deſires, heard with your good liking, and moſt effectually commended by your diligent Obſervation and* Chriſtian *Practice of their Doctrine, and therefore in theſe Reſpects were juſtly your own without the formality of a* Dedication; *and truly I deſigned them ſo intirely for the Service of your Honourable Family, that their*

Preachings had been their only Publication, and they had continued Yours still in the strictest Sence of Propriety, if an intimation of your Honour's *Desires (which to me carry the force of a Command) had not only allowed, but obliged me to make them more common: and seeing the* Cross *is not only the Badg, but the Burthen of our* Christianity, *and you have so many Fellow-Sufferers in the World, I have reason to hope, that others may find the same Support and Comfort by these seasonable Discourses, which through God's Blessing they have happily afforded you.*

And there being so many afflicting Circumstances (as it is generally known) in your Case, your Patience and Submission *will want no Advantage of Example, but be able to speak more perswasively, and make more* Converts *than these weak* Sermons *of mine, or the* Oratory *of more* powerful Preachers.

Indeed when Death *comes so near us, and makes so deep a Wound in Nature, we need an extraordinary Assistance of Grace, the Benefit of* Precept *and* Example *both, all the Helps which* Philosophy, *and* Religion *can furnish,* lest we be wearied and faint in our Minds. *St.* Hierom *writes of one* Paulina *a* Lady *of a steady and well-governed Temper in other Trials, who yet could not bear her* Children

drens *Death, without an immoderate and unſeemly Reſentment; but ſome allowance may be fairly made to the Tenderneſs of her* Sex, *when we ſee Men who have naturally a greater Conſtancy and Courage, wiſe Men,* religious *Men, ready to fall by the ſame Stroke.* Syneſius *the Biſhop of* Cyrene *was ſo affected with the Death of his* Children, *that in one of his* Epiſtles, *he* complains that the Remembrance of it, like a lingring Conſumption, waſted him daily, that all the Pleaſure of his Life died with them; *and at laſt, breaks out into this impatient Wailing;* Let me live no longer, *or* elſe forget that they are dead. *Yea, how doth the Heart of King* David, *a Saint and a Souldier, melt into a more than a Womaniſh Softneſs, and bewray its Weakneſs and Inſtability, in a Torrent of Tears, and impotent, unmanly Plaints at the Death of one* Abſolom; Abſolom *a* Traitor *and a* Rebel *to his* King *and* Father; *yet becauſe a* Son, *ſtill muſt be lamented in the higheſt Strain of Paſſion.* Epiſt. 16.

My good Lord and Lady, *you bewail a* Son *who had nothing of* Abſolom *in him, but his Beauty, who had all the Grace and ſweetneſs of Courteſy, of a moſt obliging Mind, Speech and Deportment, without any of the Guilt or Blemiſh of Flattery, Affectation, or Deſign; who wanted no Accompliſhment beſeem-*

beseeming his Noble Birth and Quality, but excelled in Piety to his God, *and Reverence to his* Parents, *and a towardly Compliance with the other Instructors and Governours of his Youth, whereby he soon became the Delight and Ornament of a learned and vertuous* Society, *dear to them as a* Child, *and honoured by them as a* Patron, *and therefore wept over as both, with a mixt Affection, but not so fond, as rational.*

Exeter College Oxon.

And indeed his obliging Qualifications procured him such a general Interest and Esteem, that every one who knew him seemed to mourn all along for him, as if the Loss had been only his without any Partner to share his Grief.

In Mr. *Laxton's* Sermon, preached on the day of his Interment.

But I design not in this, so much a Character of his Worth, *(which hath been drawn already in better Colours, and with more graceful Strokes, than my poor Stock, or Skill can supply) as a just Commendation of your* Honours *singular Piety and Patience, your deep Sense of the Displeasure, and yet your meek and humble Submission to the Will of the* Father of Spirits, *in taking from you a* Son *of so much Delight and Hope, and that in the Prime and the Blossom of his Years, when he seemed to be all Life and Vigor; a very severe and searching Trial.*

Yet

Yet I who had the unhappy Honour to be admitted into the darkest Scene *of your Sorrow, and to see your* Vertue *surprized with a most dreadful Assault, soon perceived it happily succoured with such forces of* Reason *and* Religion, *as assured an equal Conflict, if not a Victory.*

And I know you have often blessed God, *who by a wonderful Supply of his* Grace *hath maintained your Patience and Fortitude, and with the* Temptation given a way to escape, *and secure your Innocence.*

And I shall earnestly pray, that the God *of all Consolation, would be pleased still to suggest to you such Religious Considerations as may establish, and encrease your present Comfort, and lead you through all the obscure Passages of this* Veil of Tears, *into the brightest Glories of Everlasting Light and Joy, that the Belief of your* dear Son's *happy Translation, and the well-grounded Expectation of your* own, *may mortify all your earthly Affections, make you every day less concerned for what you enjoy, or suffer in this World; and that the Felicities of* Eternity, *may render the good or evil things of* Time *very indifferent to you. To these my Prayers, I shall*

upon

upon all Occasions add my best Endeavours to serve your Honours, *in promoting your highest, your heavenly Interest and Benefit, as becomes my Office and Obligations; there being no one more truly sensible of your* Honour's *Great Favours, than is,*

My Noble Lord and Lady,

Your Honours most

Faithful, Affectionate,

and Obedient Servant,

JOHN CAVE.

Of

Of Submiſſion to the Will of God.

HEB. xii. ix.

— *We have had Fathers of our Fleſh which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence; ſhall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live?*

OUR *Bleſſed Saviour*, who was himſelf, *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*, bequeathed a Legacy of Sufferings unto the Heirs of his Glory, and *it is through manifold Tribulations that we are to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: So that we are not only *born to Trouble* by the common condition of our Nature (which like the Earth that the Lord hath curſed, brings forth nothing but Briers and Thorns) but alſo *born again* to it in the State of our *Chriſtianity*, and trained up in the School of Croſſes and Afflictions, under the Diſcipline of our heavenly Maſter. But he that hath called us to ſuffer with and for himſelf, hath alſo given us the ſureſt Supports, and the ſtrongeſt Conſolations, in the moſt needful time of

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our Distress, by setting before us a *Joy unspeakable*, and over-balancing our *light Afflictions* with a *more exceeding weight of Glory*, exhorting us to Patience by his Precepts, and perswading us to it by his Promises, but more especially instructing us therein by his own most exemplary Submission and Resignation of Mind to the Will of his *Father*. And his great *Apostle*, having in the foregoing *Chapter*, reckoned up in order several eminent Patterns of Faith and Patience, in the beginning of this points, as from those many *Witnesses* or *Martyrs*, to this one glorious and triumphant Sufferer, *Christ Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith*; animating us by the Example of his victorious Patience, to a passive Fortitude and Courage in our sharpest fight of Afflictions, to an unwearied Perseverance in the roughest ways of Vertue. *Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us*; looking *unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith*; *who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame.* Look unto him, not only to admire, but to imitate the Resolution aud Invincibility of his Spirit, that you may not sink under the *Cross* which he *endured*, nor be over-whelmed with the *Shame* which he *despised*; for to this very end and purpose you are to *consider him* that *endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your Minds.* Nay, consider how much less you suffer then he did; his *Soul was exceeding sorrowful unto Death*: To *Death*, which draws an everlasting Vail over all the Glories and Delights of this World; but Joy and Comfort may again break through your closest Mourning. He shed his precious Blood for you, you only shed Tears for your selves; tho you labour under many Sorrows, and

Vers. 1, 2.

Vers. 3.

and have more Sins to ſtrive againſt, yet you have not *reſiſted unto Blood*; yet you live ſtill, and may out-live all your *Afflictions*, unleſs you make them *mortal* by your own peeviſhneſs, which in themſelves, or rather in the hand of your beſt *Phyſician*, are only *medicinal* and healthful. *Verſ.* 4.

And he hath told you as much, if you have not *forgotten the Exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you, as unto Children*; and aſſureth you of his *fatherly* Love and Tenderneſs, when he makes you ſmart moſt under his correcting Hand: *My Son, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtning of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:* Be not *ſtubborn* againſt him, nor *inſenſible* of his Diſpleaſure; for it is the *chaſtning of the Lord*, who hath power and right to puniſh: but yet be not too much dejected; for he ſpeaks you, and deals with you, not as Enemies, nor Servants, but as Children, and plainly diſcovers his *fatherly* Tenderneſs even in theſe Exerciſes of his *Lordly* Dominion, as it follows in the *6th*, *7th*, and *8th Verſes* of this *Chapter*; *For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chaſtning, God dealeth with you as with Sons; for what Son is he whom the Father chaſtneth not? but if ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons.* *Verſ.* 4.

This Conſideration, if any, methinks ſhould eaſe our Hearts in Trouble, and keep us from fainting under God's Rebukes, *viz.* that his *Chaſtiſements* are the Effects and Arguments of his Love and Good-will towards us, at leaſt-wiſe if we endure them as becometh *Children*, with a dutiful Regret for the Sins, the *Faults* that procured them, and an humble Subjection to the *Hand* that inflicts them.

And that it is our *Intereſt*, as well as our *Chriſtian* Duty, ſo to do; our *Apoſtle* further demonſtrates by a very argumentative Compariſon, in the words of my *Text*, *We have had Fathers of our Fleſh, and we gave them Reverence; ſhall we not much rather be in Subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live?*

We have had Fathers of our Fleſh; that is, of our Body, which conſiſts for the moſt part of *Fleſh*; or, *Fathers of this Life, which we now live in the Fleſh*; a Life exerciſed with *fleſhly* Inſtruments, and maintained with fleſhly Supplies; theſe *Fathers* corrected and puniſhed us as they ſaw occaſion, ſometimes with-holding their Favours, otherwhiles taking away our Toys and Vanities, the Entertainments of our *childiſh* Affections; ſometimes threatning, and otherwhiles laying on the Rod, and we *gave them Reverence*; we did not only take all patiently at preſent, but ſtood in awe of them for the future, honouring their Authority, and fearing their Diſpleaſure; *How much rather ſhall we be in Subjection unto the Father of Spirits?* that is, the *Father* of our Souls, *God*'s immediate Off-ſpring, or of our Spiritual Life, and all that appertains more directly thereunto; *Shall we not much rather be in Subjection to this heavenly Father?* who is infinitely more excellent in himſelf, in his *Wiſdom*, *Power*, and *Goodneſs*, who is the Author of our more noble part, the Soul, and upholds us in a better Being, than that which we derive from our natural Parents, and deſigns us a fruit and benefit of his Correction, beyond the Confines of this World, a happy Immortality, after a troubleſome dying Life, which is implied in the laſt word of my *Text*, *Live. Shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live?*

In

In the Words thus explained and paraphraſed, we have.

1ſt, *A Duty implied or ſuppoſed, the Submiſſion of Children to their particular Parents.*
2dly, *A Duty expreſſed, the Subjection of all Mankind, but eſpecially of Chriſtians, to the Univerſal Father.*
3dly, *The Preference of this Duty to the former.*
1. *In reſpect of the Excellency and Superiority of Fatherhood.*
2. *In regard of the End and Benefit of his Diſcipline.*

1ſt, *We are taught the Duty of Children's Submiſſion to their immediate and proper Parents*, viz. That they ought to own and honour *their* Authority, in their *Corrections*, as well as in their Commands or Inſtructions. *We had Fathers of our Fleſh, who corrected us, and we gave them Reverence*; that is, we did well ſo to do.

2*dly*, By an Argument at leaſt *à pari*, from an Equality of Compariſon; we are taught that we ought to fear and honour our *Common Father*, to be *in Subjection* to him, becauſe he is a *Father* too.

3*dly*, By an Argument in another reſpect *à diſpari*, from the leſs to the greater; we are taught that we ought to be more *ſubject to him.*

1. In regard of the Excellency and Superiority of his Nature, and his Relation to us; *Shall we not much rather be in Subjection unto the Father of Spirits?*

2. In regard of the End and Benefit of his Diſcipline, which reacheth beyond the Intereſts of this preſent State, and giveth Life and Happineſs in another. *Shall we not rather be in Subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live?*

I begin to ſpeak ſomething very briefly upon the Duty ſuppoſed, *viz.*

I. *That Children ought to ſubmit to the Corrections of their natural Parents:* They muſt neither ſturdily ſhake off, nor complain and droop too much under the Yoke, but reverence their Authority in the harſheſt and moſt unpleaſant Exerciſes thereof, tempering Joy with Fear, and pious Sorrow into a true Patience, and ſeemly Moderation of Spirit; equally bearing the Smiles and Frowns of their comforting, and their chaſtning Love, and overcoming thoſe Evils by *ſuffering*, to which they might not oppoſe an active Force.

For the Law of Nature, and Nations, as well as the Law of *God*, in the fifth Commandment, teach us the ſame
Eccluſ. 3.2. that *Ben-Sirach* doth, *The Lord hath given the Father Honour, or Power, over the Children, and hath confirmed the Authority of the Mother over the Sons*; and therefore he exhorts, *Verſe* 8, *Honour thy Father in thy Work, and in thy Word, & in omni Patientia*, as it is in the *Vulgar Latine*, *in all Patience*; that is, ſubmit to his Animadverſions and Chaſtiſements; and this the young *Greek*, that *Plutarch* ſpeaks of, was taught in *Zeno*'s School, *I have learned*, ſaith he, *patiently to bear my Father's Anger.* And indeed the Anger of a *Father* being not only the right of his Power and Place, but for the moſt part, the effect of his Love too, *Children* are not to bear it only as a *Burden*, but to receive it as a *Bleſſing*, as a means to ſecure that their *filial* Obedience and Reverence, to which God hath made ſo many, and ſo ample Promiſes of Good even in this Life.

And the ſame Reaſons of *Subjection* will hold, if not improve, in reverence to a more *common Father*, the Gover-

Governour of a larger *Family*; yet in a ſenſe the *Father of our Fleſh* too, and ſubordinate to the *Father of Spirits*, as having a right to direct and rule our outward Deportment in order to a *general* Good, and publick Peace, though by a *particular* Grievance, or perſonal Diſtreſs ſometimes; I mean the *Father of our Country*, whom we muſt reverence even when he *corrects* and rules with Rigor, and to whom we muſt be ſubject not only for *Wrath* or Fear, but for Love and Intereſt, yea for *Conſcience ſake*, and by virtue of our *Subjection* unto the *Father of Spirits*, who hath placed us (only with a reſerve for his own Prerogative) under his Dominion and Juriſdiction. But this minds me to proceed to the ſecond Particular, *viz.* to ſhew you,

II. *That it is the Duty of all Mankind, eſpecially of us Chriſtians, to be in Subjection to God the common Father*, and chief of all the Tribes and Families.

Here I ſhall undertake to ſhew you, 1. *Wherein our Subjection to this Father doth conſiſt.* And then, 2. *Confirm the Doctrine by Proof and Reaſon.*

1. Touching the nature and extent of this *Subjection*, it muſt be of a vaſt Latitude, not only *exceeding broad*, as *God's Commandments*, but as his Corrections too, embracing every *Law*, and kiſſing every Rod of his, complying with all the Ends of his *Providence*, ſo far as he is pleaſed to notify them to us, being equally diſpoſed to do, and ſuffer his Will, in one Inſtance as well as another, without diſpute or repining. But in my *Text*, it hath reſpect to the *ſuffering* part principally, if not only, to our bearing thoſe *Afflictions* which God ſends ſometimes to humble us for our Sins paſt, ſometimes to check a growing Vice, and otherwhile to prevent

prevent a future Vanity and Disorder of Life. And I shall endeavour to shew you briefly;

1. *Wherein this Subjection doth not consist.* And,
2. *Positively, wherein it doth.*

1. *It doth not consist in choosing Affliction, or bringing Trouble upon our selves, when we may fairly avoid it.*

Nor, 2. *In being insensible under it, when it lights upon us.*

1. It doth not consist in chusing *Affliction*, or exposing our selves to unnecessary Danger and Trouble.

Estius indeed renders it actively, *nonne subjiciemus nos ipsos?* shall we not *subject* our selves? But then the meaning will not be, that we should make, or lay on, our own *Burdens*, but that we should bow and stoop to *God's Impositions*. For *Afflictions* considered formally, in themselves, are Oppressions and Distresses of Nature, and so evil; and it is only the Grace, Power, and Providence of God, that brings good out of them, and makes them at any time profitable to us.

Seneca Epla. 62.

And therefore *Tormenta à me abesse velim*, said the great *Stoick* himself, I am not in love with Torments, I do not desire Crosses, *Sed si sustinenda fuerint, ut me in illis fortiter, animosè, honestè geram optabo*; but if they be imposed, I will pray that I may bear them with an unbroken Spirit, and a becoming Courage and Resolution. And questionless, though our *Christian* Religion best enableth us to undergo and and overcome all outward Troubles, yet it furnisheth us, as well with Wisdom to decline them when we may, as with Strength and Fortitude to encounter their most violent Assaults. *A wise Man*, saith *Soloman*, foresees a Danger, and will do his best

beſt to avoid it. Wherefore it was our *Bleſſed Saviour's* own Advice to his *Diſciples*, to *be wiſe* as Serpents in this ſenſe, to keep out of harms way, and to *beware of Men that would deliver up to Counſels:* yea further in the 23*d Verſe* of that *Chapter*, *When they perſecute them in one City, to flee to another.* And *Solomon* had told the World long before, or rather recorded it among his *Proverbs*, as a profitable Reſult of common Obſervation and Experience; *A prudent Man ſeeth the Plague, and hideth himſelf: but the fooliſh Man goeth on ſtill and is puniſhed.* And again, *Bleſſed is he that feareth always, ſaith the ſame wiſe King*; for Diſtruſt is the Sinew of Wiſdom, *Et bonum eſt timere omnia ut nihil timeamus*; It is good to fear all things that we may fear nothing; that is, a prudent Caution will ſet us ἔξω βέλως, out of the reach and power of what we fear. This Caution the *Stoicks* called, λόγιον ἔκκλισις βλάπτοντος, *A prudent declining of any hurtful thing.* And although to ſome this ſeems a diſtruſt of God's Providence; yet our Apoſtle aſſures us it may be an Act of Faith, in the foregoing *Chapter*. *By Faith* Moſes *when he was born, was hid three Months of his Parents*, to eſcape the Fury of *Pharaoh*.

Mat. 10. 17, 23.

Prov. 17. 17.

Heb. 11. 23.

We, who are at beſt but *God's adopted Children*, who are what we are merely by his *Grace*, and of our ſelves have no Sufficiency, either to do or ſuffer as we ought, may well pray with his *natural and only begotten Son*, that *if it be poſſible, the bitter Cup may paſs from us.*

It is true, ſince God hath been often pleaſed to work that Good by *Affliction*, which other mere gentle Methods would not effect, we ought to pray rather that he ſhould puniſh us here, than ſuffer us to periſh hereafter. *O Lord, correct me, but with Judgment,*

not in thine Anger, leſt thou bring me to nothing.

We are not obliged to expoſe our ſelves raſhly, as ſome well-meaning Sufferers did in the Primitive Times; yet, as *Seneca* ſaid of his wife and vertuous Man, *Placebit illi ignis per quam bona Fides collucebit*; We need not fear thoſe Flames which will illuſtrate our Graces, nor ſhun that Fire which will conſume our droſs only.

Senec. de beneſic. *l.* 4. *c.* 22.

In a word, as *Affliction* is an effect of *God's Grace*, and a means of improving our *own Vertue*, we may meet it with Deſire, and embrace it with Delight, but as it is an Evil to *Nature*, and an Expreſſion of *God's Anger*, we ought to avoid it when we fairly may; and pray with *David: O Lord, rebuke me not in thy Wrath, neither chaſten me in thy hot Diſpleaſure.* Nor,

Pſal. 38. 1.

2. Are we to be inſenſible of it, when God in his wiſe Providence brings it upon us; *Senſum enim Hominis nulla virtus exuit*, ſaid the *Heathen:* and the *Chriſtian* renders it thus; *No Grace of God* doth aboliſh the Sentiments of *Nature*; yea Stupidity or Stubbornneſs under the Rod, or, as our *Apoſtle* calls it, the *deſpiſing of the Chaſtnings of the Lord*, proceeds not from the Perfection, but the Depravation of our Natures. It was for this ſenſleſsneſs that God rebuked the *Iſraelites*; *Strangers have devoured his Strength, and he knoweth it not*; they are in a waſting Condition, but are not ſenſible of their Miſery. The *Prophet Jeremy* takes notice of the ſame evil diſpoſition of Mind; *Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not ſorrowed; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive Correction.* They hardned their Hearts, and either contemned, or diſregarded *God's* Judgments, than which there cannot be a higher Affront to his *Majeſty*.

Seneca.

Hoſ. 7. 9.

Jer. 5. 3.

When

When *Moſes* was a *Suitor* for his Siſter *Miriam*, he received this Anſwer from God; *Numb.* 12. 14. *If her Father had ſpit in her Face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed ſeven days?* As if he had ſaid, how much more ſhould ſhe be humbled, or aſhamed that I have teſtified my Diſpleaſure againſt her.

It ſeems to be a higher degree of Impiety to turn *God's Judgments*, than his *Grace*, into *Wantonneſs*; and therefore when the Hand of *God* is lifted up againſt a Nation, or a *Family*, if they *will not ſee*, and be ſenſible of lighter Strokes, they *ſhall ſee*, as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, and be afraid of more cutting Calamities; God will add Grief to their Sorrow, as he did unto *Barachs*, and make them faint under their reſtleſs Sighings and Complaints. But let this ſuffice to ſhew you negatively wherein this *Subjection* to the *Chaſtnings* of our *heavenly Father* doth not conſiſt. Iſa. 26. 11.

I proceed now to ſhew you *poſitively*, that it doth conſiſt,

1. *In chooſing Affliction and Miſery of any kind rather than the leaſt Sin.* Though we are not to ſeek the *Croſs*; yet we are not to go out of *God's* way to ſhunit: we muſt be content to ſuffer Perſecution, rather than ceaſe to live *godly* and *honeſtly*, in this preſent World.

It was one of the groſs Errors of thoſe nominal *Chriſtians*, the *Gnoſticks*, that they might lawfully apoſtatize from the Truth in the time of danger, and comply with the *Jews* for fear of Perſecution; for we muſt chearfully part with our Peace, our Eaſe, our Eſtates, yea our very Lives, rather than protect and ſecure them by any unlawful Practices, by any ſinful *Compliances*, or *Oppoſitions*, either denying the *Truths*, or reſiſting the *Ordinance of God*, either *deſerting* our Reli-

gion, or *fighting* in the defence of it under any false Colours, or any lawless Conduct. We must suffer all that can befall us rather than offend on either hand. Mark 10. 33. *For whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven*, saith our Blessed Saviour. Rom. 13. 2. And, *Whosoever resisteth the Power*, saith our great Apostle, *resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.* We may understand the Sin of Rebellion, and the Christian Doctrine of Passive Obedience, much better from this Text of Scripture, than from the Writings of *Bucchanan* in the days of our Fathers, of *J. Goodwin* since, and of the late Author of the Life of *Julian*: for here we are plainly taught that *Disloyalty* to our *King*, is altogether inconsistent with *Subjection* to our *God*; that the *Powers of Earth, are the Ordinance of Heaven*; and Disobedience to them, at least actual Opposition against them, will certainly expose us to the Punishments of Hell: Wherefore it hath been the constant Practice of all good Christians, where they could not escape the effects of their Prince's Displeasure either by Obedience, or by Flight, then to bear them with Submission, but never to repel, or prevent them by Force or Resistance.

Thus did the *Primitive Christians* under *Heathen* and *Heretical* Emperours: Thus did the *Waldenses* under *Popish* Persecutors; our Grandfathers under the bloody, fiery Reign of Queen *Mary*. Thus do our distressed Brethren of *France* at this present time, and thus must we all do, if God see best to put us upon the same Trials.

The *Popish Priests* and *Jesuits* have found out as many dishonest Arts of saving themselves from just and legal

legal Puniſhments, as of plotting Evil and Miſchief againſt others. I ſhall give you one remarkable Inſtance, and that is their Practice of *Equivocation* and *mental Reſervation*, uſing words of a double ſenſe to cloud and conceal the Truth, and reſerving ſome words in their Mind wholly to alter the ſenſe of what they utter. As for Example, If you ask a *Prieſt*, Art thou indeed a *Prieſt*; he will confidently and readily deny himſelf, and ſay, I am no *Prieſt*, and if need be ſwear it alſo; reſerving in his Mind, of *Baal*, or of *Apollo*; which Speech and Reſervation put together, make up an intire Sentence, *I am no Prieſt of Baal*, or of *Apollo*. Again, they will endeavour to cover Treaſon by ſaying they had no deſign againſt the *Life* of the *King*; reſerving in their Minds, of *France*. Such Lies, under other names, do they make their Refuge in times of Danger.

If our bleſſed *Saviour*, or the *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs* of *Chriſt*, had known and approved this Doctrine, how eaſily might they have eſcaped thoſe Troubles, Torments, and Deaths which they endured? When our Lord was demanded, Whether he was the *Chriſt*? how readily might he have anſwered, I am not, with this Reſervation, ſuch as ye look for? and his *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs* when they were queſtioned, Whether they were *Chriſtians*? how eaſily might they have replied, we are not, reſerving only in their Minds, ſuch as ye ſlander us to be? but they durſt not practiſe theſe Shifts: nor muſt we ſhun *Miſery* by running into *Sin*, *chuſing Afflictions with the People of God*, rather than all the Pleaſures and Proſperity of the wicked. But,

2. *This Subjection conſiſts in bearing Afflictions with Patience, not mourning immoderately nor murmuring* at all.

1. Not

1. Not *mourning immoderately*. To be inſenſible of Evils, is not to be Men; to be impatient under them, is not to be Chriſtians.

Lugere amicos luctu moderato decet, &c.

It was good and pious Counſel that of *Ben-Sirach*; Ecclus. 38. 16, 17. *Let Tears fall upon the dead, and* uſe Lamentations as *he is worthy*. *Jeſus wept* over his Friend *Lazarus*. The Church lamented the Death of St. *Stephen*, and the *Apoſtle Paul* the dangerous ſickneſs of his *Epaphroditus*.

To laugh or look chearfully at a Funeral, yea, not to drop ſome Tears upon the Hearſe of our deceaſed Friend, is a Breach of our *Chriſtian* Behaviour; yet there muſt be a mean in this, *Lachrymandum eſt, ſed non ploraudum*, we muſt weep under our *Father's Rod*, but not complain of his *Severity*, which is a further Inſtance of our Patience and *Submiſſion* to God's Will. For, Sen. Ep. 63.

2. *We muſt not murmur at all: I was dumb*, ſaid *David*, *I opened not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*: Whatever the voluntary, or unwilling Inſtruments of my Trouble may be, I ſee thy Finger in their Hand, I acknowledg thy Juſtice, and adore thy Wiſdom and Goodneſs in all that I ſuffer, either from the Unkindneſs, or Miſtakes of Men; and therefore I will not repine or complain ſo much as in a word of thy dealings with me; *Thou didſt it, and therefore I opened not my Mouth*; and there was as much Submiſſion in *Eli's* and *Job's* Speeches, as in *David's* Silence; *It is the Lord, let him do whatſoever he will*, ſaid *Eli*, after he received the ſad Prophecy of his Family's Deſtruction. Pſal. 39. 9. 1 Sam. 3. 18. Job 1. 21.

The

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord, ſaid *Job.* Job 2. 10.

He diſcovers more of this excellent Spirit, not only in bearing with his Wife's Frowardneſs, but in his meek Expoſtulation with her, and declaring the Equity of God's dealings with them both, in ſo general a Calamity: *Shall we receive Good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?* To apply this in a word to our ſelves; It is the ſame bleſſed Hand that diſtributes, and ſmites, and we ought to adore it with equal Reverence and Affection, whether it be opened wide in Bounty, or contracted cloſe in Severity.

Beloved, we have had much more Experience of *God's Goodneſs* towards us in giving us Proſperity, and a flow of Bleſſings, than we have had of his *Anger*, in taking from us our *Comforts*, and adding to our Miſeries. *And ſhall we receive Good at the Hand of God,* (and ſo much Good as we have done) *and ſhall we not receive Evil?* Shall we not patiently bear a little Affliction? not repining at the ſharpneſs of God's Diſcipline, but meekly kiſſing the Rod that ſtrikes us, humbly acknowledging the Equity of our *Father's* ſevereſt *Chaſtnings*, that all *his Ways are equal*, and that in *Righteouſneſs* he doth *afflict* us, that *our own Iniquities have wrought Evil to us*, and that the Moths, which fret and conſumeo ur Garments, have their Being and Nouriſhment from them: which is another good Evidence of our Submiſſion to the Divine Diſpoſals and Puniſhments.

3. Our Subjection in ſome Caſes muſt ſhew it ſelf, not only by a Reſignation, and yielding up of our *Wills* to the *Will of God*, and by an owning all Manifeſtations of his *Juſtice*, but by a Submiſſion of our *Underſtandings* to his *infinite Wiſdom*, and reſting ſatisfied

ſatisfied in the moſt myſterious and hidden ways of his *Providence*, ſuch as his diſtreſſing the Vertuous, and proſpering the Ungodly.

There is a good reaſon why the provident Father, who would make a laſting Conſerve of the Roſes and Violets, ſhould cut, mangle and bruiſe them, though the ſilly Child ſtand amazed at this Work; and, as the noble *Mornay* expreſſes it, *Floribus illis illachrymatur & ejulat*, weeps over thoſe Flowers, becauſe he would have them preſerved for Poeſies and Garlands. In like manner the Dealings and Proceedings of *Almighty God*, even thoſe which are moſt intricate and involved, want not their reaſonable Conſiderations to move and reſt upon. Though we who are Children in Underſtanding cannot find them out, yet we know ſo much of our heavenly Father, as to be aſſured that *his Judgments are according to Truth, and that there is no Unrighteouſneſs in him.*

And therefore, that we are in Duty obliged to adore and ſubmit to that hidden Equity and Wiſdom of his Proceedings which we cannot comprehend, and by this humbling of our Reaſon, this confining of our *Spirits* within their proper Sphere of Knowledg, we give a farther Teſtimony of our *Subjection* to the *Father* of them, which yet is compleated.

4. By Amendment of Life, by a careful avoiding and Reformation of theſe Faults, which were moſt like to move our *Father's* Diſpleaſure. This is it which the Prophet *Iſaiah* expreſſeth *by a turning unto him that ſmiteth us*; this is it which the Prophet *Micah* intends, *by hearing the Rod, and him who hath appointed it:* Every Rod of God hath a Voice, and comes to reprove us for ſome Sin, or to inſtruct us in ſome Duty, and our

Iſa. 9. 13.

Micah 6. 9.

our *Subjection* to it consists not only in a patient bearing of its smart, but in a towardly learning its Lessons; learning to be less sensual, and more heavenly-minded; less dejected with Adversity, and more humble in Prosperity; in a word, more holy in all manner of Conversation: That though we may say with *David*, *Before we were afflicted we went astray*; we may add with him also, but *now have we kept thy Word:* making it appear, that *God indeed hath chastned us for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.* Psal. 119. 67.

This is that *worthy Fruit of Repentance* which *our* blessed Saviour, in the third of St. *Matthew*, would have us *to bring forth:* This is the Work which God expects from us when his Rod is shaken over us, or laid upon us in any sore Calamity publick or personal, even to *consider our Ways*, that is, our Omissions, our Actions, our Passions, what we have done, and how we have suffered, *and to turn our feet to his Testimonies, as David* speaks, Εκȣσίων κακῶν ἀκούσια ἔκγονα.

Punishments, saith *Damascen*, are the forced Offspring of willing Faults.

If we had the true conceit of our Duty towards God imprinted upon our Hearts, and would we but add thereunto diligent Observation of our daily and hourly Neglects thereof; every particular *Cross* would direct us to some particular *Sin*, from which the *Lord* in Mercy would purge us.

And we then are *subject* and bear the *Affliction* as we ought to do; if by searching our Hearts, examining our Ways, and considering the nature of it, we endeavour to discover, and reform that particular Vice for which *God* seems to rebuke and punish us.

It was a mark of Incorrigibleness and Ignominy in

2 Chron. 28. 22. *King* Ahaz, *that in the time of his Diſtreſs he ſinned more and more*; and this the Prophet *Jeremy* laments as a greater *Miſery* then the ſoreſt *Affliction* in that People; Jer. 5. 3. *Thou haſt ſmitten them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refuſed to return.*

Pſal. 94 12. *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things*, whoſo will take warning by theſe Directions, and theſe Examples, to repent of, and reform the Evils and Errors of their Lives; *They ſhall underſtand the loving-Kindneſs of the Lord*, even under the *ſhew* of his Diſpleaſure. That, as *Tertullian ſpeaks*, *Fœlix cui Deus dignatur iraſci*; or rather in *David's* Language, *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chaſtneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him in thy Law.* But of this more hereafter.

I have ſaid as much as the time, and the deſign of my Diſcourſe would permit, touching the nature *of our Subjection to God's Chaſtnings*. I go forward to ſhew more fully, (for I have done it in part already) that we ought to be ſo ſubject, and why we ought to beſo.

And, becauſe this is a large Field, I ſhall confine my ſelf both for Proof and Reaſons to the words of my *Text*, and the foregoing *Verſes* of this *Chapter*; and I doubt not but it will plainly appear that every *Chriſtian*, every *adopted* Child of *God*, as well as the *proper Son, our bleſſed Saviour, ought to learn Obedience by the things which he ſuffers*; and to ſhew his Obedience as much, if not more in that, than any other Inſtance, as he did.

It is the deſign of the *Holy Ghoſt* in a great part of this Chapter and that foregoing, to eſtabliſh this Doctrine, and commend it to our Practice. I ſhall only ſuggeſt this

this to you for a further Confirmation and Commendation thereof, *viz.* That the *Chaſtnings* and *Afflictions*, which the *Apoſtle* here hath reſpect unto, and which are to be born with ſo much Contentment, and *Submiſſion*, were of a peculiar and extraordinary nature, ſuch as *God* hath never yet tried any of us withal, Perſecutions and cruel Uſages, the loſs of Goods and good Name, as we may infer from ſome Paſſages in the tenth *Chapter* of this *Epiſtle*, as *Cruel Mockings*, no doubt, *Scourgings*, *Bonds*, *Impriſonments*, as thoſe we read of in the latter end of the *eleventh Chapter*, and all for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, for believing in *Jeſus*, and doing the Will of *God*: Perſecutions only ſhort, if ſhort at all, of thoſe in the following Ages, when Children were ſnatched out of the Arms of their pittiful Parents, their Brains daſhed out againſt the Stones before their Faces, their beſt Friends buried in Fires, or baniſhed into ſtrange places.

Such as theſe were the *Primitive Perſecutions*, ſuch as theſe were the Loſſes, Trials, Chaſtnings, the Apoſtle endeavours to fortify his *Hebrews* againſt, and to ſupport them under: And by how much the leſs and more gentle our Sufferings are, ſo much the more patiently and ſubmiſſively ought we to bear them. They perhaps might have been better allowed to *weep* Blood, than we to *ſhed Tears*, in regard of the greater ſmart and preſſure of their Afflictions; and therefore, I ſhall hope that the Doctrine of the *Text*, though applied more particularly to their Caſes, will have an equal, if not a more effectual Influence upon ours, to adminiſter Strength, Courage and Comfort to us, in the more ordinary Calamities of our Lives, the milder *Corrections of the Father of Spirits*.

And now we come to conſider the Reaſons of this our Subjection.

1. *The firſt of which is derived from the Equality of Compariſon in my Text*, between our *natural Parents and our ſpiritual Father*: If we are to reverence and ſubmit to the one as ſuch, we are to do ſo to both, and muſt be *in Subjection unto the Father of Spirits*, becauſe he is our *Father*.

It is an Argument which God himſelf uſeth by his Prophet *Malachy*, *A Son honoureth his Father: if I then be a Father, where's mine Honour? where's your child-like Deportment?* your chearful Submiſſion to my Will? You know,

Mal. 1. 6.

1. *That a Father hath right and power to give Laws to, and inflict Penalties on his own.*

2. *He hath Kindneſs and Bowels to mitigate the Rigor of Law*, and to temper his Diſcipline according to the different Capacities and Infirmities of his Children: When the Rod is in a *Father*'s hand, Love and Compaſſion have the Management of every Blow, and it is ſaid of *God, that he pitieth us, as a Father pitieth his Son that ſerveth him.*

Pſal. 103. 13.

And as a tender *Father* pitieth the ſick *Child* moſt, ſo doth *He* moſt commiſerate us in our Diſtreſſes. *He* ſo *pitieth* us as to ſuccour us in our Troubles, and in his due time, when it is moſt for his Glory and our own Good, to deliver us out of them; according to that gracious Promiſe, *I will be with thee in Trouble to deliver thee: Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, but God delivereth him out of them all.* This me-thinks ſhould perſwade us to a patient bearing of *Afflictions*, becauſe they are *the Chaſtnings of a Father.*

Pſal 91. 15.
Pſal. 34. 19.

The

The Hand of an *Enemy* poiſons the Wound, but the Hand of a *Father* when it ſtrikes, drops Balſam; his very Rods are bound up in Silk and Softneſs, and he only wounds that he may heal; he only launces and cuts, to let out that Corruption which will not be carried off by any milder Method. But,

3. It is our *Submiſſion* to his *Corrections* that maketh it appear that he is indeed our *Father*, and we his Children; our *Subjection* warrants and voucheth our Sonſhip. Every Hypocrite will fawn upon *God* in Proſperity, ſerve him when he can ſerve himſelf on him. It is the Property of the true *Chriſtian* to adhere to him when he ſuffers for ſo doing, and to truſt in him as *Job* did, *not only when he maketh an Hedg about us*, but when he layeth us waſte, when he ſpoils us of our Goods, our Friends, our *Children*, our Health, yea our own Lives.

For, as the Valour of a *Souldier* is beſt ſeen in the Battel, and the Skill of a *Pilot* in a Tempeſt; ſo the Fortitude and Patience of a Chriſtian is beſt deſcerned in Tribulation.

Gubernatorem in tempeſtate, in acie militem intelligas. *Sen.* de provident.

Until the *Storms* and *Winds* came, *the Houſe built upon the Sand*, ſeemed to ſtand as firm and ſecure as *that upon the Rock*: and give me leave by way of further Illuſtration, to tell you, That *Chriſtian* Virtue reſembleth two remarkable Plants, which I have ſometimes taken ſpecial notice of, one of which caſts a moſt fragrant ſtrong Perfume in the Night; and the other alſo (of no leſs contrary Complexion to its fellows, as if it rejoyced at what they mourn for, the Sun's ſetting) is never ſeen to blow and ſhew its Flowers before the Evening. I am ſure the true *Chriſtian's* Graces are moſt illuſtrious and conſpicuous in the dark; yea, his *Light ariſeth*

Geranium noctu olens, *Lichnis* noctiflora.

ariſeth out of Darkneſs; and when the Sun of his outward Comforts is eclipſed or ſet, his inward Worth and Glory breaks forth as the *Noon-day*.

Lib. de Providentia proſpera in plebem ac vilia ingenia deveniunt; at Calamitates Terroreſq; mortalium ſub jugum mittere, proprium magni viri eſt. *Ibid* Sen. Ep. 13.

And ſuitable to our purpoſe, is what the Wiſdom of that ſage *Heathen*, *Seneca*, obſerved, *Magnum exemplum niſi mala fortuna non invenit*, that none have been ſo eminently and exemplarily *virtuous*, as thoſe that have been ſignally *unfortunate*: and he inſtanceth in *Socrates*, and declares that the Trial of his Conſtancy and Equanimity by a violent ſuffering of Death, made him a truly great Man: *Circuta magnum Socratem fecit.*

Affliction indeed is no certain ſign of *God*'s Favour and *paternal Love*; but the willing Suſception, and the chearful bearing of the *Croſs*, is the expreſs Condition and the peculiar Character of our *Chriſtianity*, of our ſpiritual *Sonſhip* or *new Birth unto Righteouſneſs*. And therefore before thoſe Errours and Corruptions, which we properly call *Popery*, had invaded the *Church*, the Figure of the *Croſs* was aſſumed for the Badg of their Profeſſion, and the Enſign of their Spiritual Warfare, the Pledg of their conſtant adherence to a *crucified Saviour*, as it is uſed by us at this day in the Office of Baptiſm. Hence it is that many good Men have petitioned for *Croſſes*, as thinking them the neceſſary Atteſtations of their *Sonſhip*, and means of Aſſimilation unto their *Elder Brother*.

But we are under a ſtronger Obligation, ſtill to be in *Subjection* to our *Father which is in Heaven*; becauſe,

4. He is not only the Father of our Fleſh (for in and by him *we live, move and have our* natural *Being*, and from his Bleſſing we derive all the Comforts of it) but he is the *Father of our Spirits too*, and that by a more immediate Generation: Upon which account he hath,

1. *A*

1. *A more abſolute Dominion over us.* And,

2. *An infinitely more perfect Love and Kindneſs* for us *than our natural Parents have.* Which brings me to my thrid and laſt Point, *viz.*

III. *That we ought to be more ſubject unto him, than to them. How much rather ſhall we be in Subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live?*

How much rather ſhall we be in Subjection to him, 1. In regard of the Excellency of his Nature, and the Abſoluteneſs of his Dominion. 2. In regard of the Excellency of his Nature, which is purely ſpiritual, nothing of Fleſh or Frailty in him; who is not only a *Spirit*, but the *Father of Spirits*, of Angels, and the Souls of Men, the moſt noble and refined Beings; and therefore muſt needs have an infinite Fulneſs (if I may ſo expreſs it) and Perfection of *Spirit* in himſelf, infinite *Power*, *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice* and *Mercy*; and therefore the higheſt degrees of *Reverence*, of Love and Fear, are due to his *Supremacy* of *Nature*, and, as a conſequent of this, to his right of *Soveraignty*, and rule over us. *Dominion and Fear are with thee:* Fear, as the reſult and tribute of Dominion. *If I be a Maſter, where is my Fear?* Shall we not pay that Homage to the *Father* of the whole *Creation*, to the *Soveraign* Maſter of all the World, which the Subjects of Families and Kingdoms upon Earth yield willingly to their reſpective *Lords?* Nay, ſhall not the degrees of our Obedience and Submiſſion bear ſome Proportion to the Pre-eminency of the Divine Power and Authority?

Job 25. 2. Mal. 1. 6.

When the Queſtion is put, Whom we ſhould rather obey, or be in Subjection to, the *Fathers of our Fleſh*, *the Father of our Country*, *or the Father of our Spirits*, *who*

Pſal. 76. 12.

cuts

cuts off the Spirit of Princes? St. *Auſtin's* Rule is a ſafe Direction, *Non debet minor Poteſtas iraſci, ſi major prælata ſit*, and we muſt ſtand moſt in awe of him that hath the greateſt Power and Right of Rule. And that God hath ſo, will eaſily appear:

1. *Becauſe his Dominion is Original*, in and from himſelf; all other is derivative, dependent and ſubordinate. Our *Parents* are his *Children*, and our *King* his *Subject*; *Reges in ipſos imperium eſt Jovis*; or, in the *Pſalmiſt* Phraſe, he is *terrible to the Kings of the Earth.*

2. *His Dominion is Abſolute*, no *mixed*, no *limited Monarchy.* Though we have a ſaying, that the *King* rules us, and the *Law* guides him, yet the *Supream Lord* is not under any controul, or any conduct either, but that of his own infinite *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*; he doth both in *Heaven* and *Earth*, *whatſoever pleaſeth himſelf*, and ought to pleaſe his Subjects too: But whether it pleaſeth us or no, *God* will aſſert his own *Dominion*; *The Lord will ſtill be King, be the People never ſo impatient.* It will therefore concern us as well in point of Prudence, as of Duty, never to rebel againſt that Power which we cannot ſubdue, but with an humble dereliction of our own Wills, to acquieſce in his; or, in the *Pſalmiſt's* Phraſe, to be *ſtill, and know that he is God*, and will maintain his *Prerogative.*

Pſal. 99. 5.

Pſal. 46. 10.

3. *His Dominion is univerſal*, and he reigns over all, he is *Lord* of the whole Creation, the *great* and *little* World, and of each part of Man, of the Soul and *Spirit*, which is his *Creature*, or rather *his Child*, by a peculiar Participation of his Nature.

1. He gives Laws to our Thoughts, Deſires, and Affections, which are exempt from Human Juriſdiction,

diction, and can puniſh their ſecret Diſorders. For,

2. Such is his *Soveraignty* over the *Spirit* of Man, that he can break into the Soul's laſt Reſort, and ſtrongeſt Hold, where no other Enemy can enter, and wound where the longeſt Sword of Tyrannical Perſecutors cannot reach: He can by an inviſible Dart, ſecret Arrow of his Indignation, ſhoot into the very Heart, and give a *Wound* in the *Spirit which none can bear*; He can in an inſtant move that ſence of Guilt which will attach and arreſt the Conſcience, and make Deſolation a there, where our chief Support and Comforts dwell. The moſt enraged, and malicious Perſecutors can only kill that which would otherwiſe die of it ſelf: But *there is no Man hath Power over the Spirit*, ſaith *Solomon*. *God* alone is thus mighty in Strength, and who hath hardned his Heart (ſaith *Job*) who hath ſtood out, and rebelled againſt him, *and proſpered?* Eccleſ. 8. 8. Job 9. 4.

3. *He hath the Power of Life and Death, which the Fathers of our Fleſh have not.* The Father's Power conſiſteth moſt eſpecially in theſe two Points, in puniſhing and chaſtizing the Children for their ſmaller Faults, and diſinheriting them at laſt if they prove incorrigible: but the *Father of Spirits* hath *Poteſtatem vitæ & necis*, the Power of Life and Death over all his Children, *He bringeth to the Gates of Hell, and he bringeth back again.* VViſd. 16. 13.

And this further obligeth us to a patient bearing of his Will in our own Sickneſs, our own darkeſt Walks in the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and alſo in the laſt departure of our deareſt Friends and Relatives, becauſe God is the *Father of Spirits*, and takes no more from us, than what he firſt gave us.

And hereby we do but attain to ſome degrees of *Abraham's Faith* and Patience, who was not more joyful at the Birth and Growth of his only Son, than ready to give him again to *God* in his beſt Age.

4. *He hath the Power of the ſecond, as well as* of the firſt Death; or, as our *bleſſed Saviour* expreſſeth it, when Luke 12. 5. *he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell. Men after they have killed the Body*, have no more that they can do, and our *Chriſtian* Faith and Hope will bear us up under all the Threatnings, and Strokes of their Cruelty, and enable us to ſay with Comfort, what the poor *Lepers* ſpake in diſpair. *If they kill us, we ſhall but die*; but 2 Kings 7. 4. *who knows the Power of thine Anger*, ſaith *David?* who knows what degrees of Torment the Wrath of an incenſed God can kindle after Death? Temporal Judgments are to the wicked but the beginning of Sorrows, or in St. *Gregory Nazianzen's* Expreſſion, Κάπνὸς ὀργῆς, the Smoak of the *Lord's* Anger in Hell are the Flames, and the unquenchable Fire of it.

Exod. 9. 8. 'Take the *Aſhes of the Furnace*, ſaith God to *Moſes*, 'and caſt them into the Air, and they ſhall be Sores and 'Plagues upon them: ſuch are all temporal Puniſh-'ments (ſaith the excellent Biſhop *Brownrig*) they 'are but the Aſhes of the Furnace of Hell Fire, not to be compared to thoſe everlaſting Torments. A patient bearing of thoſe *Afflictions* with which *God chaſtens* his Children and Servants in this Life, is one good way to eſcape that Wrath, which he reſerves for his Enemies in the next.

Thus have I ſhewed you briefly what good reaſon we have to *be ſubject to the Father of Spirits*, rather than to the *Fathers of our Fleſh*, our natural or civil Parents, in regard of the greater *Abſoluteneſs* and *Latitude* of his Dominion.

4. There

4. There is one thing more which advanceth *God's Scepter*, and awes us into a lower Submiſſion, and that is, *the duration and continuance of his Dominion.* This ſeems to be implied in our *Apoſtle's* preſent Argument in the very next *Verſe* to my *Text*; *They verily*, (that is, the Fathers of our Fleſh) *for a few days chaſtned us.* Their's, if a ſevere, is but a ſhort-liv'd Empire: *But God who ſhews Mercy to thouſands, puniſheth alſo to the third and fourth Generation*; yea, *His Kingdom*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, is *an everlaſting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth throughout all Generations.* I might ſay much more of *God's Soveraignty* and right of Rule over us, a right to give Laws, and to inflict Puniſhments, to exact Obedience and enforce Subjection. But I ſhall proceed to ſhew you in

Pſal. 145. 13.

The Second Sermon.

SEcondly, *That as is his Majeſty, ſuch is his Mercy*; as he hath a more compleat and abſolute Right of *Dominion* over us, ſo *he hath an infinitely more tender Love and Kindneſs for us*, than the *Fathers of our Fleſh* have: This is implied in their proper *Characters* and diſtinctions, *Fathers of our Fleſh*, and *Father of Spirits.* This beſpeaks place by his very Name and Title, which bears Signatures of *Goodneſs*, altogether as illuſtrious as thoſe of *Power*, which you have ſeen diſplayed.

Where *Fleſh* in Scripture is not uſed to deſcribe Sin either original or actual, it for the moſt part denotes Weakneſs, if not the Corruption, the Frailty of our Nature: And *Spirit* is a word of a quite contrary Import, and carries in the notion of it high degrees of Purity, Knowledg, Power and Goodneſs. But,

2. The Preheminence of God's Paternal Affection, and the Advantage of his Diſcipline, is more plainly repreſented in the laſt word of my Text, *Live*, and in the Explication of it by thoſe following words, They *indeed for a few days chaſtned* us after their Pleaſure, but *he for our Profit*.

If they deſign their Childrens Good, they may either through want of Knowledg, or exceſs of Paſſion, miſtake the meaſures of their Diſcipline; but there are none of theſe Imperfections in the *Father of Spirits*. His Anger, which is the Product of Love, is alſo the Subject of Wiſdom, and managed by both for a ſingular Benefit.

He that is the *Father of Spirits*, knows their frame, and their Frailties, what Medicines they need, and what they will bear, and as his *Wiſdom* preſcribes and directs, his *Love* adminiſters and makes Application.

1. *He knows what Medicines they need*, what will prejudice their Health, and what will purge their Diſtempers, and therefore accordingly orders them *pro jucundis aptiſſima quæq;* profitable inſtead of pleaſant things, ſometimes wholſom Wormwood inſtead of luſcious Honey.

See the Art of Contentment, p. 123, 130.

'The ſame Wiſdom and Goodneſs which denies us 'thoſe things we like, becauſe they are hurtful for us, 'doth upon the very ſame reaſon give us thoſe diſtaſt-'ful things which he ſees profitable.

A wiſe Phyſician doth not only diet, but if occaſion be, purge his Patient alſo. And ſurely there is not ſuch

ſuch a Purifier, ſuch a Cleanſer of the Soul, as are Afflictions, if we do not (like diſorderly Patients) fruſtrate their Efficacy by the irregular Managery of our ſelves under them.

God afflicts no further than the Neceſſities of his Patients require, and what is ſhort of this, is, though under the ſhew of Compaſſion, a real Cruelty.

He doth not puniſh willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men. Lam. 3. 33. Now for *a ſeaſon, if need be, you are in heavineſs through manifold Temptations.* 1 Pet. 1. 6. If our Affliction be ſharp and painful, certainly God ſeeth that we have need of it, otherwiſe he would handle us more gently.

The Husbandman plows not, but to ſow, and he plows and harrows no longer than till the Clods are broken: and God ſuffers *wicked* Men, whom the *Pſalmiſt* compares to Plowers, (or any other Haraſſers of our Eaſe and Content) no longer to make Furrows upon the *Backs*, or rather upon the Hearts of his Servants, than till they are ſoftned and broken, and become a fit ſoil for his Graces to grow in. For,

2. *He that knows our frame, underſtands our Frailties* too, not only what we need, but what we can bear, and *remembers* not only that our *Bodies* are *Duſt*, but that our *Souls* alſo partake of the Infirmities of their Companions, or rather of the Diſcompoſures of their Inſtruments, and therefore reſolves that he will not *contend for ever, neither be always wrath, leſt the Spirit ſhould fail before him, and the Souls which he hath made; but he puniſheth us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve*, and hath promiſed to *lay no more upon us than we are able to bear*, and that *we ſhall not be tempted above our Strength.* Iſa. 57. 16. Ezra 9. 13. 2 Cor. 10. 13.

If he *chaſten* ſore, he *will not deſtroy*; if he cauſe *Grief*, *yet will he have Compaſſion according to the multitude of his* Lam. 3. 32.

Pſal. 102. 13, *his Mercies. Many times turned he his Anger away, and did not ſuffer his whole Indignation to ariſe, for he remembred that they were but Fleſh.*

God will either enlarge our Grace, or abate our Trouble, ſo that it ſhall not overwhelm us.

Who can lift up a Complaint againſt ſo compaſſionate a *Father?* Who can rebel, ſo much as in a hard thought, of the Rigor of his Diſcipline? Eſpecially if we conſider that he is altogether as much a *Father* when he *corrects*, as when he *cheriſheth* us; and that he deſigns the ſame Good in a variety of Conditions. He gives Riches to ſome, that they may honour him with their Subſtance, and keeps them from others, leſt they ſhould abuſe them to Avarice or Riot. To ſome he gives Children to be the Staff and Solace of their Pilgrimage, and takes them from others, leſt they ſhould take them from himſelf, and draw down their *Affections from*

Eccl. 37. 28. *things above.* Some he continues in this World *to declare the Works of the Lord*, and others he takes out of it *to reſt from their own Labours. All things*, ſaith the *wiſe Man*, *are not profitable for all Men.* And the Wiſdom of the Divine Providence is ſeen as well in ſending Winter, as Summer, Autumn as Spring, foul Weather as fair, Adverſity as Proſperity, Sickneſs as Health, and Death as Life.

It was a high Speech of *Seneca's* (after the manner of the Stoicks) *Bona rerum ſecundarum optabilia, adverſarum mirabilia: That the good things of Proſperity are to be wiſhed, and the good things of Adverſity are to be admired.* But to ſpeak the words not only of Truth, but Soberneſs, great and numerous are the Benefits of Ad-

Eſſays. verſity. The *Judicious Verulam* magnifies and extols them in this Compariſon: *Proſperity is the Bleſſing of the*

the Old Teſtament, Adverſity of the New, which carrieth *the greater Benediction, and the clearer Revelation of God's Favour.*

Solomon pronounces *Sorrow* more deſirable than *Laughter, becauſe by the ſadneſs of the Countenance the Heart is made better.* Eccleſ. 7 3.

'*Our bleſſed Lord and Maſter,* who began, and lived and 'died in Sorrows, ſeeing his own Sufferings to ſucceed ſo 'well, and that for ſuffering Death, he was crowned with 'Immortality, reſolved to take all his Diſciples and Ser-'vants to the Fellowſhip of the ſame Sufferings, that 'they might have a Participation of his Glory.

No Affliction, ſaith our *Apoſtle,* a little after my *Text,* is *for the preſent joyous, but grievous; nevertheleſs it produceth the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs to thoſe that are exerciſed therewith.*

Thoſe ſhowers which wet the Husbandman, multiply his Grain, and a dripping Seeds-time is uſually followed with a more plentiful Harveſt. If the Servants of *God* ſow in Tears and Blood, thoſe Tears and Blood will but water and manure their Graces, and make them ſpring up, and blow into a fuller and fairer Glory: Thick Miſts uſher in a bright day, and Clouds of Sorrows are uſually the fore-runners of a more clear and conſtant Joy, and *Death* it ſelf is an inlet to immortal *Life,* which would bring me to the Concluſion of my *Text* and *Sermon,* the great and laſt end and benefit of all our *Croſſes,* or rather of our *patient* bearing of them, *everlaſting Reſt,* and Exemption from Trouble in the *Life to come.* But it will not be amiſs, not only for the vindicating of God's Juſtice, but alſo for the Exaltation of his Mercy, to ſhew in ſeveral Inſtances, what *good Ends,* though ſubordinate to this *great one,*

he

he propounds to himſelf in his moſt ſevere Chaſtnings. One good End is,

1. *To make us ſenſible of our Sins*, and thereby to lead us to Repentance. In the warm Seaſons of Health and Proſperity, variety of delightful Objects call our Thoughts abroad, and we heighten the Pleaſure of our Enjoyments, by the proſpect of our Hopes, and eaſily flatter our ſelves that when the Sun ſhines, and the World ſmiles upon us, God is well pleaſed with us too; and that our Sins are little becauſe his Mercies are ſo great: but when ſtormy Clouds and Thunder are in the Air, we keep within doors, we retire into our ſelves, and in the *time of Adverſity conſider*, what and how great our *Sins* are which have overcaſt our *Heaven*, darkned the *Light* of *God's Countenance*, and made
Job 10. 16. our *Face foul with Weeping*, as *Job* ſpeaks.

The *Goodneſs* of *God* indeed ſhould *lead us to Repentance*; but ſuch is the Diſingenuity of our Natures, that we too often *deſpiſe his Goodneſs*, and force him either to leave us in our *Sins*, or puniſh us for them, which is the moſt merciful Cure that our Caſe will admit of.
Job 36. 7. *If they be bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of Affliction, then he ſhews them their Work, and their Tranſgreſſions*, as *Elihu* ſpeaketh.

Ruth 1. 13. When God had taken away from *Naomi* her two Sons (though by an ordinary and uſual Death) ſhe concludes, and ſo ſhould we in the like Caſe, that her Sins had deſerved it, and *that the hand of the Lord was gone out againſt her*. *David's* Afflictions had this good Effect
Pſal. 35. 5. upon him, *When thy Hand was heavy upon me*, &c. *I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and mine Iniquity have I not hid*. We are all too apt to *turn the Grace of God into Wantonneſs*, only impudent and hardned Sinners deſpiſe his *Judgments*.

2. As

2. As our *Afflictions* do in general admoniſh us of our *Tranſgreſſions*; ſo (as hath been already intimated) they point us to thoſe particular Sins which provoke God's Diſpleaſure. *Joſeph's* Brethren eaſily acknowledged their Guilt, becauſe they ſaw their Sin written upon their Puniſhment; Their cloſe Impriſonment taught them what it was to caſt their Brother into a deſolate Pit. And the *Wiſe-man* obſerves, that the turning of the Egyptian Waters into Blood, was a manifeſt Reproof of that cruel Commandment for the murdering of the *Hebrew Infants*. Wiſd. 12. 5.

And ſurely, as one ſpeaks, we might in moſt, if not all our Sufferings, ſee ſome ſuch correſponding Circumſtances, as may lead us to the immediate provoking Cauſe of them. God who does all things in number, weight and meaſure, does in his Puniſhments alſo obſerve a ſymmetry and proportion, and adapts them not only to the Heinouſneſs, but even the very ſpecifick kind of our Crimes, which was obſerved by *Quintus Curtius* in the caſe of *Beſſus*, who betrayed *Darius*. *Sceleſti haud rarò ſupplicia luunt ejuſdem generis cum illis quæ patrârunt flagitiis.* Wicked Men are uſually paid home in their own Coin, made to ſuffer in the ſame way they ſinned; in which we ought not only to take notice of the *Juſtice*, but of the *Mercy of God* in giving ſuch Inſtructive Corrections, which, like *Jonathan's Rod*, that was *dipped in Honey, enlighten our eyes*, diſcover to us by a very affecting Evidence, both the nature of our Sin, and the neceſſity of our Repentance. *The Art of Contentment.* *Quint. Curt.* P. 203, 204. 1 Sam. 14. 27.

3. *God ſends Afflictions to try us. Behold, I will melt them, and try them.* Jer. 9. 7.

Now this fiery, this melting Trial, hath theſe two good Ends.

1. *To refine our Natures, to purge away our Droſs and Corruption.*

2. *To diſcover and illuſtrate our Virtues and Graces.*

1. *To purify our Natures and purge away our Droſs and Defilements.* Prov. 17 3. *The fining Pot is for Silver, and the Furnace for Gold, but the Lord trieth the Hearts.*

We are by Nature *Maſſa corrupta, Children of Wrath,* being at beſt but like Gold and Silver in the Oar, till God puts us into his *Fining-Pot*, and *his Furnace*, yea after *God's Grace* hath renewed us in our firſt Converſion, we have many groſs and droſſy Intermixtures, which will not eaſily be cleanſed off without a frequent Application of ſome ſearching *Refiners*; the *Word of God* indeed is an excellent one, *Sanctify them by thy Truth, thy Word is Truth. The Word of the Lord tried him:* Pſal. 105. 19. and ſo it doth many others. But,

2. Affliction is alſo a great Refiner: Iſa. 48. 10. *I have refined thee, but not with Silver; I have choſen thee in the Furnace of Affliction.* The Furnace is not for the hurt of the Gold, but for the Advantage and Improvement of it, it loſeth nothing there but its Droſs, and becomes more precious, more fit for the Maſter's uſe, to be made a Veſſel of Service and Honour: So are Troubles and Afflictions God's Inſtruments, to cleanſe and purify our Natures, to work out the Pride and Vanity of our Minds. This is that good end the *Apoſtle* refers to immediately after my *Text*, *He chaſtens us for our Profit*; How? *That we may be Partakers of his Holineſs.*

And we ſhould endeavour to gather theſe *Grapes* and *Figs* even from our *Thorns* and Thiſtles, theſe bleſſed

bleſſed Fruits of Humility, Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs, I mean, from the *Tree of the Croſs*, that ſo we may comply and cloſe with God's Merciful Purpoſe in afflicting us, ſaying with *Eliku* in all meekneſs, and true contrition of ſpirit, *I have born Chaſtiſements, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* But, Job 34. 31, 32.

2dly. *Afflictions* are ſent for tryals of the Truth, and ſincerity of our Graces, our *Faith*, *Patience*, and the like: *That the tryal of our Faith, being much more precious than that of Gold, which periſheth, though it be tryed with Fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory*, ſaith St. *Peter*: and *Tribulation worketh Patience*, ſaith St. *Paul*. To both theſe, that of *Minutius Felix* ſeems to refer, *Ut Aurum ignibus, ſic nos diſcriminibus arguimur*; as Fire trieth Gold, ſo Croſſes and Perils diſcover the Truth and the ſtrength of Virtue. 1 Pet. 1. 7.

This is taught us in the Parable of the Stony Ground. Every forward Hearer of the Word, every ſpecious Profeſſor goes for a good *Chriſtian*, till he is like to ſuffer for his Profeſſion, and till *Tribulation* or *Perſecution* ariſe *becauſe of the Word*. Mat. 13. 20, 21

God indeed ſees through our hypocritical Coverings, all our painted and guilt Out-ſides, and needs no Touchſtone to find out our hidden Faults. But becauſe we are ſometimes apt to miſtake our ſelves, our own Strength, as St. *Peter* once did, God in Mercy tries us to give us a right underſtanding of our ſelves, of the true Habit of our Minds. *Seneca* reports it as the ſaying of his admired *Demetrius*: *Nihil mihi videtur infœlicius eo, cui nihil evenit adverſi. I think no Perſon ſo unhappy, as he who enjoys an uninterrupted Felicity.* And he ſhews his Approbation of it by giving this *Lib.* de providentia.

Reaſon for it, *Non licuit enim illi ſe experiri, for he could never prove* and know *himſelf*, what he was, and what he was able to do or ſuffer. Agreeable hereunto is that of St. *Auſtin, Tentat Deus non ut ipſe hominem inveniat, ſed ut homo ſe inveniat: God therefore thus tries, not that he may find out a Man, but that Man may find out himſelf*, and be ſenſible of his own condition.

Hoſ. 5. 15. 4. *Afflictions make us more frequent and fervent in Prayer.* Moſt Men too much forget the *God* of their Mercies, but *in their Affliction they will ſeek me early.* Iſa. 26. 16. *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a Prayer when thy Chaſtiſement was upon them.* The Sun of Proſperity puts out the Fire of Devotion, which is kindled and enflamed by the *Antiperiſtaſis* of a Winter Blaſt, a bleak Seaſon of Adverſity. *Iſrael* learnt not to mourn until they were ſent to *Babel. Jonas* ſleeps in the Ship, but wakes, and prays in the Whale's Belly.

5. *God in Mercy exerciſeth good Men with Croſſes and Sufferings, to wean them from the World*, to diſcover the Indifferency, if not the Worthleſneſs of thoſe Perſons or Things which they promiſe themſelves moſt Satisfaction and Comfort from: In our Friends and Relations it is uſually ſeen, *God* ſooneſt takes thoſe from us, for whom we have the greateſt and moſt immoderate Paſſion, leſt they ſhould alienate our Affections from himſelf, or abate the degrees of them, and cool our purſuit of a *Heavenly Happineſs.*

Yea, when he takes away our *Children*, the dear Parts of our ſelves, the Off-ſets of our Stock, he doth not only deſign the better Growth and Fruitfulneſs of our own Spiritual Life, by removing the Suckers of Piety and Virtue; but he deſigns alſo their Improvement

ment and unſpeakable Advantage, by tranſplanting them into his own *Paradiſe*.

Pliny the eldeſt, (though he could not ſee into the Glories of another Life for want of our *Revelation*, yet had ſtudied the World very much, and for his parts of Nature, Wit and Curioſity, and other great Advantages of Fortune, might be ſuppoſed to know as much as any mere *Philoſopher*) made this Obſervation, that no Wiſh was more frequent among Men, than the Wiſh of Death, and thereupon his Concluſion is, that *Natura nihil brevitate vitæ præſtitit melius*; *that Nature hath not done us ſo great a Kindneſs in any thing, as in ſhortning our ſtay in this Life*, that we may not contract too great an Intimacy with the World.

And that we may not too much lament the Condition of thoſe that leave the *World*, before it leaves them, who are blaſted in the Beauty, and Flower of their Youth, have their Evening before Noon, and die in their firſt Enjoments of the Pleaſures of Life. He elſewhere calls Death, *Præcipuum Naturæ bonum*, *the chief Bleſſing of Nature*, which cannot come out of Seaſon; becauſe there is no Good in this Life, which is not either tempered with ſome preſent Evil, or followed with ſome evil Effects and Inconveniencies: according to that of *Pliny the younger*, in his incomparable Panegyrick; *Habet has vices conditio mortalium, ut adverſa ex ſecundis, ex ſecundis adverſa naſcantur*; *Such is the changeable State of us Sojourners upon Earth, that our Comforts breed Croſſes, and what we reap in Joy, was firſt ſowed in Tears.*

This is another good End of God's chaſtning us, to wean our Affections from this World, while we live in it, and to reconcile us to Death, our laſt Enemy, and

to

to make us willing to follow our Friends into another World, who could not ſtay with us here, and from whom we cannot there be ſeparated.

I ſay, me-thinks we ſhould not be very fond of ſuch a Life, either for our ſelves, or thoſe we love beſt; which is not only ſo ſhort that it cannot be kept long, but withal, ſo full of Trouble, that it is hardly worth the keeping; nor by conſequence to dote on a flattering World, which is ſo little to be enjoyed, and its Enjoyments ſo very full of vexatious Mixtures.

Lib. de providentiâ. 6. *Beſides that particular and perſonal Good which God deſigneth us in our Chaſtiſements, he reacheth the Benefit of our Example to others*, and teacheth them Patience and Conſtancy by our Subjection to his *Fatherly* Diſcipline. *Seneca* ſpeaks it of good Men in their Sufferings, *Nati ſunt in Exemplar, they are born to be Patterns to others.* And we are adviſed in this Chapter to conſider our *Saviour's* Endurance, for the fortifying of our ſelves, the Confirmation of our Courage and Patience, *leſt we be wearied and faint in our Minds. Chriſt*

1 Pet 2. 21. *ſuffered for us*, ſaith St. *Peter*, *leaving us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps.*

7. God deſigns a future Good in our preſent Chaſtiſements, and the Prevention of a greater Evil, than that which now oppreſſeth us. *The Father of Spirits* regardeth principally their Intereſt, and if he grieve them here it is that he may ſpare them the better hereafter;

1 Cor. 11. 32. *When we are judged, we are chaſtned of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World.* And indeed, what can afford us ſo firm and ſolid a Support under all our Loſſes and Croſſes, all our Diſappointments and Calamities of this Life, as the comfortable Aſſurance and Expectation of a bleſſed Immortality? You have heard

heard that the *Father of Spirits* projects many Benefits and Advantages to us in those Afflictions which seem most to express his Displeasure, and that we ought to receive them chearfully at his hand, as the Medicines of our Soul, and the Seasonings of our Fortune, as the Incentives of our Devotion, and the Instruments, Polishers and Discoverers of our Vertue; but that which will enable us not only to bear the Cross with Patience, but with Triumph, and *to glory in Tribulations*, as the *Apostle* speaks, is the Presage of future Joy, and that well-grounded *Hope of Glory*, which they excite in our Souls. So that in regard of this great and last Benefit of our Sufferings, I may forbear any further Perswasions to Patience, and leave you under the Command and Compulsion of so prevailing a Motive as your own *Eternal Life* and *Happiness*. If there are other very good Reasons, as you have heard derived from the *Power* and *Goodness of God*, this may supersede them all, *How much rather shall we be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? Live* longer and more comfortably in *this World*, *live* for ever in an Eternity of Health and Happiness in the *next*.

Now, the God of all Grace, who hath called us to his Eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

FINIS.